

as he speaks the animated bundle gets away, and Toddy and Budge start in pursuit, only to come into violent contact with a little girl who is also chasing some animal. "It wasn't really a baby, you know, it was a pig." "'Twashen't," says Toddy, "'twash my Aunt Alishe's dog Jerry, and he'sh got away." "My name is Alice," explains the little girl modestly, "but it really *was* a pig you know," and she said—"It was like this," explains Budge in his most judicial manner, but Alice in Wonderland is more than a match for him at logical reasoning, and the argument will be a long one.

In a group near are the April, May, and June Babies, and playing with them is a certain Reggie, who is a very nice little boy, though the others complain that his sister Mary doesn't always play fair. There is a sturdy, rosy, jolly-looking little boy watching them, and if they cry he calls them Mary Annish. Some people think he is nearly related to that child who goes "lame and lovely;" certainly he knows some secrets hidden from the other children, and known only to those whose love for children is very deep. There is an elusive little girl here who sometimes, in a vague way, reminds me of David, though they have no characteristic in common. She is known here as the only and original Annie and Louise, and she is a curiously lovable child, but no one knows very much about her, or if they do they won't tell. Perhaps David knows, he knows so many things; about Peter Pan for instance, and the boat the thrushes built, and the lost spade, and many other things. Sometimes David tells tales about these things to the other children, and they will all listen—even Kim, though some people say that Kim is jealous because David knows so much of that Tutelar Genius of Childhood.

M. D. E.

## THE ARTHURIAN LEGENDS.

King Arthur is represented as having been a British King, who in the sixth century united the British tribes in resisting the invasion of the pagan Saxons, and is therefore the champion not only of his people, but also of Christianity. His fame is widely spread, for he is claimed as a prince in Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, Cumberland, and the lowlands of Scotland—in a word, by all those countries where the Brithonic race spread.

We first hear of him in literature in the lays of the Welsh bards, supposed to be of the sixth and seventh centuries, but they do not assert him as a contemporary; indeed it is more than probable that he is not an historic personage at all, but an ancient Celtic deity, shorn of his divinity and given historic attributes, just in the same way as O-din, when he ceased to be the All-father or God of the Norsemen, came to be considered the remote ancestor of their kings. Still it is possible that there may have been a prince of that name in the sixth century, and naturally all the myths and legends of the remote ancestor or god would crystalize around him. The story of Arthur was begun in England by Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welsh priest at the Court of Henry I. (1132-1135), who pretended that he had been given an ancient Welsh book to translate which told the history of Britain from the days when Brut, great-grandson of Æucas, landed on its shores. It was really only a clever putting together and invention of some Welsh and other legends, but it made as great a sensation as the tales of De Rougemont in later days. Geoffrey really thus created the heroic figure of Arthur, but his stories were told in Latin prose. They were soon, however, taken up in Normandy and France, and, added to from Breton legends, were made into a poem, so that Geoffrey's work was the source of the famous metrical romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In poetic



form they first came back to England as the work of Wace, a Norman, who called his poem the "*Geste des Bretons*," which he completed in 1155.

In this French form they drifted through England, and were woven by an English priest, named Layamon, into the famous alliterative English poem of the "*Brut*" (circa 1205). It linked together Welsh, English, and Norman, giving them a common bond of interest. But meanwhile in France, French invention had begun to play upon the story, and Chrestien de Troye's "*Conte de Graal*" (Perceval), about the latter end of the twelfth century, combines the Graal story with the Arthurian legends. About the same time come "*Le Grand Saint Graal*" and "*Queste del Saint Graal*," attributed to Walter Map, a friend of Henry II., in the latter of which Galahad appears for the first time, and "*Le petit Saint Graal*," by Robert de Boron. This Grail legend is of very ancient date, and though one German writer says that it comes originally from the East, receives in Spain its Christian signification, and passes thence through Provence to North France and Germany, it is, I believe, generally supposed to be of Celtic origin. Old Celtic sagas tell of a hero who journeys to the land of shades and brings back talismans, and amongst them this inexhaustible vessel of plenty and rejuvenation. This tale got mixed up at an early period with a Peredur (Perceval) saga, in which the hero, to avenge a kinsman, had to seek for a magic lance and sword. This Peredur, or Perceval, came in contact with Brau, lord of the under-world, afterwards identified with Bran, brother-in-law of Joseph of Arimathea (to whom Christ had given the Grail or Holy Dish of the Last Supper), in whose charge it was brought to England. Thus the old Celtic heathen vessel of youth and plenty came into connection with the follower of Christ, who was a favourite legendary figure on British soil.

We can easily see how the Christianization of the legend would bring about a profound change in the conception of the Grail. In the earlier Romances, notably the "*Conte de Graal*," the Grail is simply a miraculous, food-producing vessel; but in later writers, who wished to make the story a means of moral and religious teaching—especially in Robert de Boron—the properties of the Grail are almost exclusively

spiritual. In the "*Grand S. Graal*" and "*Queste del S. Graal*," however, the tendency is more moral and less dogmatic, and they are really glorifications of asceticism—the new hero, Galahad, being specially created to typify purity.

He, with Perceval and Bors, alone of Arthur's knights, succeed in beholding the Grail, follow it to the East, where he and Perceval die, but Bors returns to Arthur's court. In Germany Wolfram von Eschenbach, the famous Minnesinger, worked out a far nobler ideal in his "*Parzival*" (circa 1210), in which the Grail becomes the symbol, not of ascetic longing, but of human striving and human love in their noblest manifestation. From this source Wagner derived his famous opera of "*Parzival*." The account differs somewhat in Wolfram, who makes the Grail a costly dish of jasper, which the angels, after Joseph of A.'s death, took into their keeping and held it suspended in the air, until Titurel, the Grail King, builds a castle for it in Spain, and founds a spiritual knighthood for the guarding of the treasure. Only through humility and self-renunciation can a man enter this spiritual knighthood. Thus the Knights of the Grail represent a perfect spiritual—as the Knights of the Round Table a perfect earthly—knighthood. Sir Thomas Malory in his "*Morte d' Arthur*" (1485) draws largely from the "*Queste*," and in modern times the interest in the Arthurian legends has been revived through Tennyson's beautiful "*Idylls of the King*."